



Edward Corey  
Political Director, Connecticut College Democrats

In favor: H.B. No. 5241  
An Act Requiring A Study of A Pay-It-Forward College Payment Plan

Members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee:

Honorable Chairs Senator Cassano, Representative Willis, Vice Chairs Senator Bye, Representative Haddad, Ranking Members Senator Boucher, Representative LeGeyt, Members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee, I am here today to testify in favor of House Bill 5241, An Act Requiring A Study of A Pay-It-Forward College Payment Plan.

As a Connecticut college student, the issue of college affordability is very important to me. You may be aware that the Oregon State Legislature recently directed that state's Higher Education Coordinating Committee to create a pilot program for a pay it forward model. Under this model, students would pay no upfront cost for their degree, instead paying a flat percentage of their income for a period of time after graduation.

This model is new and innovative, and Connecticut can and should be leading the way in higher education reform. The average American student graduates college with over \$21,000 in student loan debt, and student loan debt is now larger than credit card debt in the United States. Lenders make billions of dollars in profits from interest on student loans, and students can never discharge their loans in a bankruptcy.

Pay-it-forward is a progressive plan that ensures that those who earn the most with their degree will pay the most, while those who earn the least are not saddled with enormous debt to be paid on a meagre salary. No reform should ever be enacted without its implications first being studied, however, and that is why I support this legislation. A study of pay-it-forward will better inform the legislature to act to make college more affordable.

I thank you for your time and attention to this critical matter. This legislation is immensely important to thousands of Connecticut college students.

Sincerely,

Edward Corey